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ABSTRACT

Although apprenticeship used to be viewed as academically questionable, today many educators consider it an ideal vehicle for the work-based learning necessary for the school-to-work transition. In particular, youth apprenticeships are seen as having potential to minimize youth floundering in the labor market, ensure educative work experiences, increase earnings and educational attainment, and make school more meaningful. Unions may perceive youth apprenticeship as a threat to their influence, or they may view it as a help in maintaining unions and wages. Many states focus their efforts on employer participation in youth apprenticeships, but concerns about costs, lost trainer productivity, and liability often affect employer participation in youth apprenticeship. Employers involved in apprenticeship would prefer increased training and support for workplace mentors and trainers and improved coordination with schools. Women tend to be underrepresented in apprenticeship and to enjoy less favorable earnings outcomes, while African Americans are often over-represented but have less favorable completion rates and employment and earnings outcomes. Students may not be aware of apprenticeship opportunities, or they and their parents may have unfavorable perceptions of this option. (This document contains an annotated bibliography listing 28 references.) (KC)

Apprenticeship
Trends and Issues Alert No. 19

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Apprenticeship

In the past, apprenticeship was often viewed as pedagogically questionable and biased toward employers' interests (Sutliff 1995). Today, however, many consider it an ideal vehicle for the work-based learning necessary for the school-to-work transition (Hamilton and Hamilton 1997b). In particular, youth apprenticeships are seen as having potential to minimize youth floundering in the labor market, ensure educative work experiences, increase earnings and educational attainment, and make school more meaningful (Gregson 1995). Likewise, newer learning theories see apprenticeship as providing desirable opportunities for constructivist learning with its scaffolding, mentoring, and communities of practice (Guile and Young 1998).

Apprenticeship has become increasingly attractive to many as a means of preparing workers for today's high-tech, high-performance workplace with its demands for a blend of technological, information, interpersonal, and lifelong learning skills (Evanciew and Rojewski 1999; Galura 1996; Robertson 1998). Apprenticeship's direct ties to employment make it a natural element of the market-driven, customer-focused job training system envisioned by the Workforce Investment Act (*The Workforce Investment Act* 2000).

Unions may perceive youth apprenticeship as a threat to their influence, or they may view it as a help in maintaining unions and wages (Maxwell 1998). Employer participation in youth apprenticeships is a focus of many state efforts (Bremer and Madzar 1995; New Hampshire Department of Education 1998), but concerns about costs, lost trainer productivity, and liability often affect employer participation in youth apprenticeship (Vo 1996). Employers also call for increased training and support for workplace mentors and trainers and improved coordination with schools (Phelps and Jin 1997).

Race and gender are long-standing issues in both registered apprenticeship and youth apprenticeship (Arizona Department of Education 1997; Goetz 1996; Scribner and Wakelyn 1997). Women continue to be underrepresented and to enjoy less favorable earnings outcomes (University of Central Florida 1998; Washington State Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board 1998), whereas African Americans are often overrepresented but have less favorable completion rates and employment and earnings outcomes (ibid.).

There is concern about low student awareness of apprenticeship as an option as well as general career and labor market awareness (Scharfenberg 2000; Smith 1997; Washington State 1998). In addition, participation may be limited by the perception among both students and parents that apprenticeship is a low-prestige alternative to college or university (Gitter and Scheuer 1997; Scribner and Wakelyn 1997).

The following resources provide additional information about the current state of apprenticeship.

Resources

Ainley, P., and Rainbird, H., eds. *Apprenticeship: Toward a New Paradigm of Learning. The Future of Education from 14+.* London: Kogan Page, 1999. (ED 437 517)

Scholarly treatment of the history of apprenticeship, apprenticeship from disciplinary perspectives, apprenticeship as a model of learning, and contemporary policy debates on apprenticeship.

Arizona State Department of Education. *Arizona Work-Based Learning: An Educator's Guide for K-12 and Beyond.* Phoenix: Division of Vocational Technical Education, AZDE, 1997. (ED 417 316)

Step-by-step guidelines and ideas for program creation, implementation, and improvement; legal information; and issues.

Association of Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology of Ontario. *Apprenticeship 2000: Ontario Community Colleges' Vision for the 21st Century.* York: ACAATO, 1997. (ED 431 457)

Vision of apprenticeship as a value-added investment in people that enhances the skill level of the work force; the plan aims to remove barriers and increase flexibility, access to further training, and industry ownership and recognition.

Bremer, C. D., and Madzar, S. "Encouraging Employer Involvement in Youth Apprenticeship and Other Work-Based Learning Experiences for High School Students." *Journal of Vocational and Technical Education* 12, no. 1 (Fall 1995): 15-26.

Explains benefits of involvement; analyzes barriers to and incentives for involvement; proposes strategies for enhancing employer involvement.

Cantor, J. A. *Cooperative Apprenticeships: A School-to-Work Handbook.* Lancaster, PA: Technomic, 1997. (ED 405 471)

Explains the process of designing, developing, and implementing cooperative apprenticeship—structured workplace training to provide formal instruction with structured work-based experience, including preapprenticeship, youth apprenticeship, and registered apprenticeship.

Evanciew, C. E. P., and Rojewski, J. W. "Skill and Knowledge Acquisition in the Workplace: A Case Study of Mentor-Apprentice Relationships in Youth Apprenticeship Programs." *Journal of Industrial Teacher Education* 36, no. 2 (Winter 1999): 24-54.

Analyzes apprenticeship as a means of integrating school- and work-based learning and preparing technologically knowledgeable workers with the social skills needed for the modern workplace.

Galura, M. "From School to a Career in Construction." *Tech Directions* 55, no. 7 (February 1996): 16-18.

Details benefits to students, schools, and contractors of an apprenticeship program using a nationally standardized curriculum and training standards.

Gitter, R. J., and Scheuer, M. "U.S. and German Youths: Unemployment and the Transition from School to Work." *Monthly Labor Review* 120, no. 3 (March 1997): 16-20.

Contrasts the German social consensus valuing apprenticeship as preparation for the workplace with the U.S. valuing of traditional academic workplace preparation; discusses transferability of the German model to the U.S. one.

Goetz, S. J. "Workforce Training Issues." In *Exploring the Frontier of the Future: How Kentucky Will Live, Learn, and Work*, edited by B. M. Sebastian, P. Schirmer, M. Smith-Mello, pp. 105-115. Frankfort: Kentucky Long-Term Policy Research Center, 1996. (ED 438 124)

Analyzes Kentucky's experience in relative decline of apprenticeship over time, low participation of women and minorities, future potential; discusses implications for youth apprenticeship.

Gregson, J. A. "The School-to-Work Movement and Youth Apprenticeship in the U.S.: Educational Reform or Democratic Renewal?" *Journal of Industrial Teacher Education* 32, no. 3 (Spring 1995): 7-29.

Sets school-to-work and apprenticeship in historical context; describes both the shortcomings and potential of apprenticeship.

Guile, D., and Young, M. "Apprenticeship as a Conceptual Basis for a Social Theory of Learning." *Journal of Vocational Education and Training* 50, no. 2 (1998): 173-192.

Reconceptualizes apprenticeship as the basis for "reflexive learning," addressing lifelong learning, collaborative/transformative learning, and knowledge production.

Hamilton, M. A., and Hamilton, S. F. "When Is Work a Learning Experience?" *Phi Delta Kappan* 78, no. 9 (May 1997): 682-689. Derives principles of effective work-based learning from a youth apprenticeship program to promote high-quality work-based learning.

Hamilton, S. F., and Hamilton, M. A. "When Is Learning Work-Based?" *Phi Delta Kappan* 78 no. 9 (May 1997): 676-681.

Advocates apprenticeship as the most elaborate and intensive type of work-based learning that must be embedded in a system of industry standards.

Maxwell, B. "Unions in School-to-Careers: Friend or Foe?" *Techniques* 73, no. 1 (January 1998): 20-22.

Describes the crucial role of organized labor in designing work-based learning programs; suggests ways to address labor concerns and overcome barriers to labor involvement.

New Hampshire Department of Education. *Practices in Work-Based Learning*. Concord: NHDE, 1998. (ED 437 551)

Comprehensive information and guidelines for program design and implementation issues for a variety of work-based learning strategies, including youth apprenticeship.

Packert, G. "Apprenticeships for the 21st Century." *Phi Delta Kappan* 77, no. 10 (June 1996): 682-684.

Discusses the advantages and challenges of apprenticeship as preparation for the high-tech, high-performance workplace.

Phelps, L. A., and Jin, M. *Wisconsin Youth Apprenticeship Employer Survey, 1997*. Madison: Wisconsin State Department of Workforce Development, 1997. (ED 427 248)

Employers supported allowing summer work hours, condensing the program, and reducing core competencies; requested increased training, support, and coordination from schools.

Rhoder, C., and French, J. N. "School-to-Work: Making Specific Connections." *Phi Delta Kappan* 80, no. 7 (March 1999): 534-542.

Cites cases to demonstrate how apprenticeship provides the elements of school-to-work; identifies awareness of program goals, student motivation, problem solving, flexible tasking, and stakeholder commitment as keys for success.

Robertson, J. "Apprenticeship: A Model for Lifelong Learning in the Workplace." *Canadian Vocational Journal* 33, no. 4 (Winter 1998): 5-9.

Explains how the elements of apprenticeship (industry-based standards, organized system, integration into further training and advanced education, laddered learning) promote and enable lifelong learning.

Scharfenberg, M. A. "Attitudes of New High School Graduates toward Apprenticeship Careers as First Choice." Master's Thesis, University of Alberta, Edmonton, 2000. (ED 440 250)

Found very low awareness of apprenticeship and associated career opportunities, little time and research in career decision making; suggests higher prestige of academic programs as a barrier.

Scribner, J. P., and Wakelyn, D. "Youth Apprenticeship Experiences in Wisconsin: A Stakeholder-Based Evaluation." Version of a paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, Illinois, March 24-28, 1997. (ED 422 505)

Analyzes benefits and shortcomings of youth apprenticeships, including issues of minority and female participation, integration of school- and work-based experiences, and incentives or obstacles affecting stakeholder recruitment and participation.

Smith, C. L. "Initial Analysis of Youth Apprenticeship Programs in Georgia." *Journal of Vocational and Technical Education* 14, no. 1 (Fall 1997): 20-32.

Identifies the lack of career guidance and exploration as a barrier to enrollment and effective participation in youth apprenticeship; outlines needed information and student characteristics for success.

Sutliff, R. I. "Revival of Apprenticeship Education in America." *ATEA Journal* 22, no. 4 (April-May 1995): 7-10.

Reviews the history of apprenticeship, attitudes, and administration and implementation issues in light of changing social values.

University of Central Florida. *Registered Apprenticeships in Non-traditional Occupations for Florida's Women*. Orlando: College of Education, UCF, 1998. (ED 428 185)

Analyzes individual, societal, and work-related issues relating to women's participation in apprenticeship—benefits, access, barriers, and strategies for improvement.

U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Office of Apprenticeship Training, Employer and Labor Services (ATELS) <http://www.doleta.gov/atels_bat/>

ATELS consolidates the Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training (BAT) and responsibility for employer and labor liaison; the site provides information on the National Apprenticeship System.

Vo, C.-D. H. "Selling Self-Interest." *Vocational Education Journal* 71, no. 2 (February 1996): 22-25.

Analyzes employer-perceived barriers to participation in youth apprenticeship and other work-based learning programs; presents strategies to reduce or eliminate barriers.

Washington State Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board. *Workforce Training Results 1998: An Evaluation of Washington State's Workforce Training System*. Olympia: WSWTECB, 1998. (ED 425 348)

Analyzes nine state work force training systems (participation, persistence, competency gains, employment, earnings, participant and employer satisfaction); identifies barriers and areas for improvement.

The Workforce Investment Act. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Apprenticeship Training, Employer and Labor Services, 2000. <http://www.doleta.gov/atels_bat/Finalwhi.htm>

Outlines the role of apprenticeship programs and state and federal apprenticeship agencies in meeting the goals of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998.

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